

UNTOLD

STORY LEADS FROM MONTANA



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Prime Stomping Grounds for Dinosaurs

During the Cretaceous and Jurassic periods, Montana was a lush, tropical Nirvana for dinosaurs ranging from *Tyrannosaurus rex* to *Maiasaura*.

Millions of years later, Montana is still prime country for dinosaurs: paleontologists from all over the world visit to unearth fossilized remains. And now, a unique partnership of dinosaur-themed attractions in Big Sky Country—known as the Montana Dinosaur Trail—is letting visitors follow in the footsteps of the prehistoric giants. Literally.

The Montana Dinosaur Trail puts the spotlight on thirteen facilities in ten Montana communities that feature significant, unique—and world class—paleontology displays and activities for visitors. On the trail you'll see the largest assembly of dinosaurs collected within the United States. The first baby dinosaur bones found on this continent are here as well as the world's best preserved dinosaur—bones, skin, soft tissue, last meal. The world's very first *Tyrannosaurus rex* was discovered in Montana in 1902. Today, you'll find the world's largest full-size skeletal model of *Seismosaurus* here. New fossil discoveries are happening all along



Makoshika Dinosaur Museum in Glendive.

the trail and many of these will be prepared at and displayed in the Trail's facilities.

A brochure and web portal feature a map to help visitors find all thirteen Montana Dinosaur Trail stops (available from Travel Montana at www.visitmt.com). These include museums, interpretive centers, state parks and field stations.

Many offer visitors opportunities to participate in hands-on dinosaur field digs. The thirteen Montana Dinosaur Trail facilities are:

- Carter County Museum, Ekalaka
- Makoshika State Park, Glendive
- Makoshika Dinosaur Museum, Glendive
- Garfield County Museum, Jordan
- Fort Peck Interpretive Center and Museum, Fort Peck
- Fort Peck Paleontology, Inc. and Dinosaur Field Station, Fort Peck
- Phillips County Museum, Malta
- Dinosaur Field Station, Malta
- H. Earl Clack Memorial Museum, Havre
- Upper Musselshell Museum, Harlowton
- Old Trail Museum, Choteau
- Two Medicine Dinosaur Center, Bynum
- Museum of the Rockies, Bozeman.

For more information, or to request a Montana Dinosaur Trail brochure, go to www.visitmt.com.

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Montana Highway 37 Travels to Other Worlds

Two hundred years ago, Lewis and Clark embarked on a journey of discovery that took them across every region of Montana.

Today, modern-day explorers are still treated to unique and interesting discoveries in Montana's northwest corner. Visitors driving through this area via Montana Highway 37 find themselves in different worlds, ranging from the Old World charm of an Amish community to the untouched world of old growth forests to the underwater world of Lake Koocanusa.

There's no better place to start a scenic drive than on the golf course, and the town of Eureka has two brand new ones: Buckwood Country Club and John's Golf Course. The Buckwood Country Club is a nine-hole par three executive course in the shadows of the Tobacco Root Mountains just seven miles outside of town. John's Golf Course, meanwhile, is a different kind of course: Steve

Espinoza built the course as a labor of love for his son John. John's Golf Course charges no greens fees, offering a place where disabled and handicapped golfers are free to play at their own pace.

Old World crafts come to life during the Eureka Quilt Show and the Amish Quilt Show and Farm Auction in Rexford. This year, the Eureka Quilt Show features two days of workshops with famed teachers Linda Jenkins and Harriet Hargrave. Just a few miles away in the town of Rexford, the local Amish community holds an annual Quilt Show and Farm Auction the second Saturday of every June, with all proceeds going to the Rexford Amish School. Visit www.kilmerwares.com/auction.html and www.eurekaquiltshow.com for more information about these events.

But Montana 37 doesn't just bring visitors to the town of Rexford. It also introduces them to the underwater world of Lake Koocanusa, a 90-mile reservoir of turquoise



Lake Koocanusa on Highway 37

formed by Libby Dam. Lake Koocanusa (the name is an amalgam of the words "Kootenai," "Canada" and "USA") is one of the best land-locked salmon fisheries in the Northwest United States. Here, MT 37 parallels the lake for 67 miles, helping it receive the designation of Scenic Byway—a designation readily seconded by the visitors who discover the many worlds along its path.

The sights and sites along MT 37 are in Northwest Montana's Glacier Country. Go to www.glacier.visitmt.com to find lodging and other information.

Buzzards and Badlands

More and more travelers are discovering past lives—learning about paleontology, archaeology, history and adventure—at Montana State Parks all across Custer Country.

In Glendive, Makoshika State Park's 11,531 acres of pine and juniper studded lands are dominated by sandstone and shale rock. But 65-80 million years ago, it was an oceanfront subtropical paradise where dinosaurs roamed freely; the fossils of mollusks and other marine sediment are the evidence left behind. Exhibits at the visitors' center illustrate the transformation of this place from its dinosaur days to the present-day landscape of whimsical caprocks, hogback ridges, fluted hillsides and pinnacles. For visitors who want to get up close and personal, roads and hiking trails offer miles of exploration. Summer activities include Buzzard Day every June—when the turkey vultures return to the park from winter migration—and an annual fundraiser sponsored by the Friends of Makoshika.

Pictograph Cave State Park, six miles south of Billings, is the place for those hunting prehistoric hunters. A short paved trail offers views of ancient pictographs (or rock paintings) and the caves—Pictograph, Middle and Ghost—where thousands of artifacts were found. Although its focus is prehistoric, modern



Makoshika State Park

conveniences such as picnic tables, drinking water and grill rings are here; bicycles are allowed on the road, but not on the trail.

Medicine Rocks State Park, 25 miles south of Baker, preserves an area where Indian hunting parties came to be with the spirits; the porous rock, eroded into extraordinary layers and shapes, adds to the spiritual, otherworldly feel of the area. A group use area and group camping are available.

For more information, go to <http://fwp.state.mt.us/parks/>

Where Early Anglers Get the Worm (or in this case, Trout)

Some folks adapt more quickly to the changing seasons. Take springtime anglers in Montana's Yellowstone Country, for example.

They aren't waiting around for Fourth of July fireworks or the dog days of summer to dust off their fishing tackle.

In fact, just as the ice is coming off many of the Big Sky state's most revered rivers, you'll find them quietly slipping on their fishing vests and waders, tying on a "match the hatch" fly, heading out in stealthy pursuit of their favorite finned quarry.

Whether on the Yellowstone River, the Stillwater, the Boulder, or perhaps one of Paradise Valley's famous spring creeks, savvy anglers have long realized some of Montana's best fishing of the year precedes runoff. There's a magic window before mountain snowpacks begin melting when the fishing turns on. Aquatic insect hatches can spark feeding frenzies amongst local trout residents. Having tugged copious fish to hand, aching forearms are just one occupational hazard anglers need to be wary of.

One particularly venerated hatch is the Mother's Day caddis fly hatch. Despite its namesake nod to moms' special day, this hatch tends to occur during the second or third



A springtime angler casts a line.

week in April. Depending on one's chosen fishery, anglers rely on the variables of nature to coincide—the warming days of spring and clear flowing rivers. All of a sudden, out of the depths, flitting taupe wings begin to appear on the surface of the water. Soon thousands of caddis hover in transparent clouds over Yellowstone Country's fabled rivers, as they will for a few days. As they arrive, so do the sipping, circular rings of hungry, feeding trout, gorging on this seasonal delicacy.

Whether a pent-up angler, or simply a keen observer of quirky lifestyle and natural phenomena, people the world over know this as the pinnacle of fly fishing. The added bonus is watching Yellowstone Country take on a budding, pale green hue.

Visit <http://fwp.state.mt.us/fishing/guide> for more information.

Horsin' Around

Southwest Montana has long been known as horse country; it was here that Lewis and Clark traded for horses to continue their journey west 200 years ago. Now it's also known as a center of equine excellence, thanks in no small part to La Cense Montana, an 88,000-acre ranch just outside of Dillon.

Some very unusual things are happening here. First, young registered Quarter Horses are brought to the ranch, trained for one-to-two years in natural horsemanship techniques—and only those techniques—and then sold on the recreational market. If one wonders what is so unusual about giving people the opportunity to buy a well-trained, well-behaved animal, one only needs to remember where the old term "horse trader" comes from—a long history of selling dangerous or ill-treated horses to the unsuspecting.

But that's the tip of the iceberg. La Cense has partnered with the University of Montana-Western to offer the nation's only two-year degree in natural horsemanship, with a four-



Natural horsemanship at La Cense Montana.

year degree in the works this year. La Cense also offers upper-level Parelli Natural Horse.Man.Ship® clinics to students from around the U.S. In addition, the ranch is host to several European students each year who are part of a two-year program at La Cense's sister horse farm in France, called Haras de la Cense.

You won't notice all that immediately upon visiting the ranch—or even upon visiting Dillon, for that matter. People in the horse world tend to take quiet pride in what they do. They just form partnerships with horses unlike any other, and help others learn to do the same thing.

Log onto www.lacensemontana.com for more information.

A Dam Fine Interpretive Center Opens

Fort Peck Dam began as an ambitious project spearheaded by Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1933. After seven long years of work, the dam was completed, creating one of the largest man-made reservoirs in the United States. Now fast-forward sixty years. In the early 90s, another giant dream was launched in the same setting: Fort Peck Dam Interpretive Center and Museum. And after nine years of dreaming, planning and hard work, it will have its grand opening celebration on May 7, 2005, timed to coincide with the bicentennial celebration of other visionaries who visited this area: Lewis and Clark.

Much like its namesake, the free Interpretive Center and Museum is a marvel of teamwork. It was conceived and designed through a unique three-way partnership involving the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Fort Peck Paleontology Incorporated, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Spectacular exhibits already in place for the grand opening include a life-sized model of Peck's Rex, one of the world's most significant *Tyrannosaurus rex* discoveries unearthed just 10 miles away. There are also several other dinosaur-themed exhibits, as well as exhibits about Fort Peck Lake, the C.M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge, area boom towns and more. In addition, two giant aquariums—one 5,500 gallons, the other 8,500 gallons—showcase native and game fish of Fort Peck Lake and the Missouri River.

The grand opening celebration will include a ribbon-cutting ceremony, featuring representatives of the three partners, dignitaries from congressional offices, and others who helped make the center a reality. Following the ribbon-cutting, a variety of presenters will give programs throughout the weekend on topics such as paleontology and wildlife.

Fort Peck Dam Interpretive Center and Museum is located near the town of Fort Peck in Montana's Missouri River Country. Go to www.visitmt.com to find lodging and other information, or contact: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at (406) 526-3411, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service at (406) 526-3464 or Fort Peck Paleontology Inc. at (406) 526-3539. There is no charge for the Interpretive Center.



Plan to "Explore! The Big Sky" at the National Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Signature Event June 1-July 4, 2005 in Fort Benton/Great Falls

**It's here! The Lewis & Clark
Expedition Bicentennial officially
began January 18, 2003, in
Charlottesville Virginia.**

Tourists are planning their own expeditions to the Fort Benton/Great Falls area and will enjoy the beautiful surroundings while reliving the treacherous journey that changed our country 200 years ago.

As the journals of Lewis and Clark unfold during this 34-day event, "Explore! The Big Sky" commemorates the fateful decision at the Marias River confluence, celebrates the portage end in Great Falls and honors the native cultures of the Indian tribes along the Lewis and Clark trail. Families and Lewis and Clark aficionados alike will enjoy the activities offered each day.

The event begins June 1 and continues through July 4. "Explore! The Big Sky" offers everyone a chance to immerse themselves in the traditional life ways of the Plains Indians through the exploration of Indian villages and the cultural displays presented by Montana tribes. On-lookers can watch Indian athletes compete in horse and canoe races, or games of skill and accuracy, or play these time-honored games themselves. Deep-rooted stories from the past will be told through an opera based on the Blackfeet legend of Scarface or by enjoying a concert featuring Rita Coolidge celebrating the many types of music of our Nation's Tribes.

Relive the daily struggles of travel against the swift Missouri River current with living history interpreters demonstrating camp life. Gain special insights about the Expedition members with lectures by distinguished authors Dr. James Ronda, Dr. Gary Moulton and Dr. John Allen and

more. Delight in special exhibits and receptions with artists and docent tours at eight cultural museums in Great Falls. Lunch with the Corps on the riverbanks in Fort Benton or at the great falls of the Missouri River.

Hear and see the story first-hand on tours showcasing the same pristine beauty encountered by Lewis and Clark. Revel in musical entertainment including a ballet choreographed to a composition based on the Lewis and Clark story; old-time fiddlers reviving the sounds of 200 years ago; or community concerts featuring invited guest musicians. Culminate the portage end and celebrate the Corps of Discovery's second Independence Day along the trail with a statewide parade, community picnic, fireworks and special music.

**Plan your own expedition now
by visiting the event website at
www.explorethebigsky.org. Tickets are on
sale now; tickets for your own expedition.**

'Fish & Bison at the Century Mark

Proving once again that the best things stand the test of time, two visitor favorites are celebrating milestones in 2005: the town of Whitefish turns 100, while the National Bison Range in Moiese hits 97 years.

Whitefish, known today as a thriving crossroads of recreation and commerce, was first incorporated in 1905 as ... a thriving crossroads of recreation and commerce. Originally settled by explorers and trappers in the late 19th century, its selection as the division point for the Great Northern Railroad led to its

eventual incorporation. To mark the occasion, the city is offering a series of celebrations throughout the year, including a Time Capsule Ceremony, a historic film festival, and a Grand Finale Centennial Celebration in August.

The country's only National Bison Range, near Moiese, marks 97 years in 2005. It was established in 1908, making it one of the nation's oldest wildlife refuges. Today, some 500 bison, along with 200 species of birds, elk, bear and other wildlife are on hand to celebrate the occasion.

More information: www.whitefishchamber.org or bisonrange.fwp.gov

FROM MONTANA

The diversity of events, places and people in Montana is almost as wide as the state itself. We hope to give you a taste of that diversity with this quarterly newsletter. In addition, the following services are offered to editors, writers and producers:

Visual Materials

Color slides and stock video footage are available for editorial use.

Writer/Photographer Referrals

We can put you in contact with many of Montana's most talented and experienced freelance writers and photographers.

Editorial Copy/Calendar of Events

We can provide background information or editorial copy for many subjects. We also maintain a calendar of events for the entire state.

Individual Attention

If you need the latest vacation guide and road map of Montana, a liaison with other government agencies or detailed information to fit a specific story angle, we're here to assist you.

**Contact Donnie Sexton, Publicity/Photography
donnie@visitmt.com / 406-841-2897**